

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this application in light of the above amendments is courteously solicited.

The examiner in his office action dated September 25, 2003 indicated the subject matter of previously submitted dependent claims 12 and 17 as being allowable. Applicant has amended independent claim 1 so as to include the subject matter of indicated allowable dependent claim 12. In addition, independent claim 18 has been amended so as to include the indicated allowable subject matter of previously submitted claim 17. The remaining claims in the application are either dependent directly or indirectly on one of amended independent claims 1 and 18. Accordingly, all of the claims as pending are now in condition for allowance and an early indication of same is respectfully requested.

An earnest and thorough attempt has been made by the undersigned to resolve the outstanding issues in this case and place same in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or feels that a telephone or personal interview would be helpful in resolving any outstanding issues which remain in this application after consideration of this amendment, the Examiner is courteously invited to telephone the undersigned and the same would be gratefully appreciated.

It is submitted that the claims as amended herein

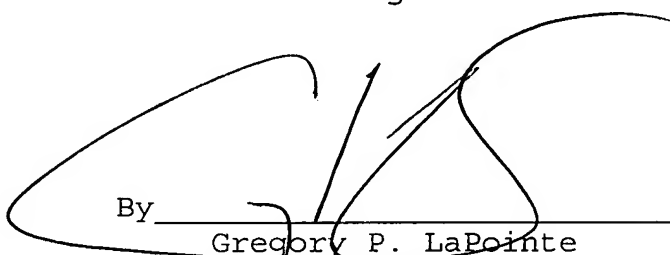
patentably define over the art relied on by the Examiner and early allowance of same is courteously solicited.

If any fees are required in connection with this case, it is respectfully requested that they be charged to Deposit Account No. 02-0184.

Respectfully submitted,

Lothar Kugler

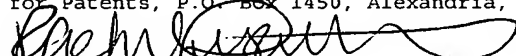
By



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Date: February 19, 2004

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: "Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313" on February 19, 2004.



Rachel Piscitelli